

As the official archival agency and custodian of archival records and permanent repository for state publications of the state of North Carolina, DCR has mandatory responsibilities to preserve and maintain access to digital assets along with traditional print materials. Visitors to the State Library and State Archives are increasingly coming via cyberspace as more people expect information to be available through the Internet. To serve their constituents, the State Library and State Archives are providing more information and services to remote users. By DCR taking the lead in the preservation of digital assets, the State Archives and State Library will be able to protect their investment in digitized collections and collections of born-digital state government information and continue to provide quality services to support the research needs of their user community.

SCOPE

The digital preservation program will be responsible for identifying, securing, and providing the means to preserve and ensure ongoing access to digital government assets created by North Carolina State Government. A digital asset is an electronic object that has value for some purpose. It may have been created digitally or it may have been digitized from a non-digital original source to enhance access to the material. Examples of digital assets include word processing documents, databases, websites, and digital publications and other organizational records. To become part of DCR's digital preservation program, a digital asset will be evaluated in accordance with records retention policies and appraisal of its long-term or permanent value to the State of North Carolina. Assets selected for permanent retention will have ongoing usefulness or significance, based on the administrative, legal, fiscal, evidential, or historical information they contain that justifies their continued preservation. The following types of records will be included under this program:

- *Digitized assets produced by state government agencies*
- *Born-digital assets produced by state government agencies*
- *Born-digital assets produced by local government agencies*

CHALLENGES/INCENTIVES

With the information age comes the knowledge society in which knowledge is a commodity traded through digital means. The transition from a printed to a predominantly digital environment within state government has already begun. The success of the transition will be hampered, however, by the potential loss of important digital assets that document the history and decision-making processes of North Carolina State Government. Current DCR programs and resources are simply not adequate to support a sustained digital preservation program. DCR acknowledges that the development of a comprehensive and effective digital preservation program is a complicated task. The challenges in creating such a digital preservation program include, for example, rapid changes in digital technology, the growth of information and formats, the need for new staffing and skills, the ability to sustain a digital preservation program, and the